book's extensive notes, bibliography, and index demonstrate how vast the topic of food has become in across scholarly disciplines, and Palma's book is an important source on the subtleties of food, language, and power.

LISA BOUTIN VITELA, Cerritos College

***Phronêsis – Prudentia – Klugheit: Das Wissen des Klugen in Mittelalter, Renaissance und Neuzeit. Il sapere del saggio nel Medioevo, nel Rinascimento e nell'età moderna*, ed. Alexander Fidora, Andreas Niederberger, and Merio Scattola (Porto: Fédération des Instituts d'Études Médiévales 2013) 348 pp.**

In Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon [New York 2001]), Aristotle divides "practical wisdom" (*phronêsis*), or prudence, and "scientific knowledge" (1026). Aristotle explains that practical wisdom focuses on "action" not on "making" art or science. For practical wisdom, "good action itself is its end." Aristotle gives the example of the great statesman Pericles (and men like him) as possessing practical wisdom, because they can see what is good for themselves and what is good for men in general. As such, Aristotle quickly establishes that those who possess practical wisdom are good at managing households or states (1026). This particular implication would impact the way through which *prudentia* has been read in political philosophy since Aristotle. The present volume of conference proceedings is the result of papers presented at an international conference on *Phronêsis – Prudentia – Klugheit* (as Prudence can be read in Greek, Italian, and German) that took place in the Villa Vegogni di Menaggio on Lake Como in 2012. It is an edited collection whose contributions seek to trace the history and reception of the notion of prudence from Aristotle. The volume, with contributions in German and Italian (Genua's contribution on Harrington is in English), focuses on the reception of *Phronêsis* in philosophy, and mostly from the medieval to the early modern period; in fact, most of the contributors themselves discuss the influence of Aristotle's terminology in political philosophy. For example, Enrico Berti traces *prudentia* and distinguishes it from *sapentia* or *sophia*, a distinction that would be further marked in the Middle Ages and which philosophers and critics continue to argue over.

The volume includes thirteen essays and a short introduction by the editors in German and Italian. While the essays range in time period and focus (political, judicial, ethical prudence in ancient, medieval, early modern, and some modern manifestations), a longer introduction would have added necessary definitions on the Aristotelian notion of *phrônesis*, and set forth a thematic unity which the conveners of the conference set out to investigate. One particular essay does an excellent job of providing the missing introduction: In terms of the essays' breadth, Enrico Berti's contribution remains useful in recapitulating Aristotle's differentiation between "prudentia" and practical philosophy, which has led to misleading interpretations. Berti looks at misleading translations of *phrônesis* with *prudence* or *sagesse*, which is also complicated by Kant's introduction of *Klugheit* which Kant associated with *Geschicklichkeit* or "ability" and "dexterity" and which is translated into Italian as *sagezza* or *prudenza*. This mistranslation is at the core of many of the volume's essays, the title of the volume, and the mostly bilingual edition (Italian/German with one

exception). It anything, we are not sure if *phrônesis, prudenza,* and *Klugheit* all refer to Aristotle's concept of practical wisdom. That said, through Berti we see that *phrônesis* is both a sensation and intelligence; it is an intelligence that has the object of a particular action. In one illuminating instance, Berti analyzes the practical syllogism that Aristotle includes in the *Nichomachean Ethics* about "light meats" and "praxis" as concerning the "particulars" which then become the familiar. For Aristotle, it follows that *phrônesis* is not a science because science has universal aims and *phrônesis* deals with the particulars (31).

Hans Daiber's essay is a welcome contribution in a volume dedicated to western Eurocentric perspectives. His essay looks back at the Hellenistic roots of *phrônesis* in the philosophical ethics of Islam. According to Daiber, we begin to see a polarization between godly omnipotence and freedom during the Umayyad Dynasty in the eighth century. Daiber examines how Islam influences the contract between rulers and his subjects. For example, men are free to rebel against their rulers if these do not follow the Koran or the Sunna of the Prophets. As religion and philosophy become more and more intertwined, Daiber sees that *phrônesis* turns into a necessary morality for regents and rulers. Moreover, we read how philosophers after Farabi followed a Neo-Platonism where society becomes a necessary evil and philosophers treasure individuality (59). In the shift to the eleventh century, followers of *phrônesis* include the Koran in a clear and praxis-based *Ethik* (Ragib-al-Isfashani). Subsequent Islamic thinkers after Ibn-al-Muquaffa start to consider an individual's judgment as God-given and bound to follow the "right" path within Islam.

In a turn to the European Middle Ages, Alexander Fidora's contribution is an attempt to retrace how *prudentia* becomes marginalized as ethics becomes a science, an action which a few contributors attribute to Thomas Aquinas. However, Fidora ends with the observation that authors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries seek to rescue the status of *prudentia* as a practical dimension of science (75). Yet, as he states, these debates continue even into the nineteenth century. Markus Riedernauer's essay, however, focuses on Thomas Aquinas and the turn to political philosophy—justice dictates the importance of practical wisdom in political circumstances. Interestingly, Andreas Niederberg's contribution on William Ockham sees *prudentia* as an individual matter (124). Ockham's complex notion of premeditation and intention, in which actions are separated from the actor's intentionality, has the result of transforming an "immoral" action into a "moral" one (for example, suicide). As Niederberger contends, Ockham's *prudentia* sees that the "moral" work one does for oneself is the most important.

At the same time that the volume discusses the transformation of ethics and politics into science (Aquina), it also depicts prudence in juridical law. For example, Orazio Condorelli analyzes *Iuris-prudentia* in canon and civil law from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. His essay, while dense and inclusive of many footnotes (185 to be exact) on canon law, should be useful for those studying the concept of practical wisdom in law in this period.

The volume continues with various contributions on economics and prudence through a study of the Venetian Gasparo Contarini (Pietro Bassian Ros-

si), and the use of practical wisdom in politics during the Renaissance. The latter contributions on *prudentia* in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries focus on the slow transformation of the concept by natural law. *Prudentia* again becomes subordinated in political theory. Contributions such as Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggeman's article describes the decrease in prudence's prominence. In contrast, Marco Geuna's essay on James Harrington's Ancient Prudence studies the way through which Macchiavelli and Harrington differ in their reuse of ancient concepts of *prudentia*. Macchiavelli uses the Roman experience and Harrington relies on the Hellenistic and Israeli experiences (agrarian law). Also in the eighteenth century, Yasuki Funaba focuses on the Kantian concept of prudence in its new juridical and political role. Finally, Heinz-Gerhard Justenhoven uses *prudentia* to think about war, peace, and integration in the contemporary world and focuses on Germany. In one particular pointed example from 2010, he examines the then German President's (Horst Koehler) resignation after Koehler linked the state's own economic interests with the deployment of troops in Afghanistan. In this case, the state's own self-interest leads perhaps to its lack of prudence and morality.

At times, the lack of a longer introduction leaves this reviewer feeling that the material, while arranged chronologically, could have been organized thematically. Likewise, the image of Giotto's *Prudentia* (ca. 1306), the cover image of the volume, is the only illustration. Hence, the analysis of visual representations of prudence in art history are lacking in the present volume. That said there are many fine contributions in this volume that will aid scholars in medieval and early modern philosophy in understanding a history of prudence from Aristotle until the eighteenth century, with particular strengths in the reception of these ideas in the medieval and early modern periods. The many case studies and analysis advances our knowledge on prudence, a task that might hinder those limited in their German and or Italian to read all of the essays in the volume. For those readers, abstracts in the "other" language of the volume would have helped serve as a bridge between the Romanistik and the Germanistik and their meditations on prudence.

GIOVANNA MONTENEGRO, Comparative Literature, UC Davis

Eyal Poleg, *Approaching the Bible in Medieval England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2013) 256 pp.

In *Approaching the Bible in Medieval England*, Eyal Poleg discusses the mediation of the Bible in late medieval England: that is, the average layperson's experience of the Bible not as text, but through multisensory media such as liturgy, music, sermons, images, ceremonial objects, and ritual performance. *Approaching the Bible*'s ambitious goal is to describe the interaction of the many different ways in which the Bible was known in the Middle Ages; the extent to which this interaction was shaped by the clergy; and the level of control laypeople had over the process. The strength of Poleg's book is its holistic approach to the complexity of Biblical transmission in medieval society. It synthesizes previously separate areas of scholarship and embeds detailed case studies from late medieval England in a broader historical overview. The methodological principle of *médiologie* governs Poleg's historical narrative, drawing on the work of Marxist theorist Régis Debray; *médiologie* analyses the

Copyright of Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval & Renaissance Studies is the property of University of California at Los Angeles, Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.